

*[English]***Industrial Status to Agriculture**

2106. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA :
SHRI K.P SINGH DEO:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have any proposal to give industrial status to agriculture ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ; and

(c) if not, the time by which the final decision is likely to be taken by the Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) to (c) The draft Agriculture Policy Resolution prepared by the Government discussed in the Meeting of the State Agriculture Ministers held on 19th February, 1997 stipulates that "A positive trade and investment climate for agriculture will be created on par with industry. The objective of the policy will be to bestow on the agricultural sector, in as many respects as possible, benefits similar to those obtaining in industry such as easy availability of inputs and infrastructural facilities for the development of agri-business activities and development of effective delivery systems for the purpose."

*[Translation]***National Human Rights Commission**

2107. SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Human Rights Commission of India and Pakistan have agreed to work together for expeditious release of the citizens of both the countries imprisoned in each other's Jails:

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) the details of the discussions held in this regard : and

(d) the number of persons imprisoned in each other's jails for whose release steps have been taken by these Commission so far ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (d) Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan called on the Chairperson of National Human Rights Commission on April 26, 1997. During the discussions the issue of release of Indian and Pakistani prisoners in Pakistan and India respectively also arose among other issues. Possibilities of both the Commissions playing an important role for the speedy release of prisoners in both the countries were considered.

*[English]***Agreement with French on Agricultural Sector**

2108. SHRI SUBRAHMANYAM NELAVALA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the French Government has offered co-operation on marketing of Indian products in Europe and other countries;

(b) whether India and French have signed any agreement in regard to co-operation in the agriculture sector;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the extent to which this collaboration has improved the India's food position and export to Europe Union ; and

(d) if not, the reaction of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) to (d) An Agreement was signed between India and France on cooperation in the field of Agriculture and Agro-Food Industries on 6th February, 1994. The Agreement envisages development of scientific, technical and economic cooperation between the two countries in the fields of agriculture, fisheries, forestry, rural development and in the agro-food industries. Under this Agreement, both the countries will make efforts at coordinating technical and scientific cooperation as well as economic cooperation by encouraging various organisations of research and training to cooperate or undertake joint research activities. The collaboration can take the form of exchange of scientists and experts, materials and information, training and supply of materials and equipments as well as organization of seminars and workshops. The Agreement will remain in force initially for a period of five years.

In pursuance of this Agreement, both countries developed a work Schedule by mutual consultation in various sectors of agricultural activities. Under the Work Schedule, it was also agreed that there could be an exchange of trade missions between the two countries in order to increase awareness amongst French importers of Indian tropical and off-season fruits and vegetable exports. It was also agreed to take steps to bring quality control and testing standards at par with the European Economic Community's specifications. A Trade Mission was sponsored by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) in April, 1995 to promote export of Indian fruits like mangoes, grapes, pomegranates and litchies. APEDA has informed that although there is a good demand of fruits like litchies in affluent markets like European union, India is as present unable to take the benefit of market demand due to its handicaps in production as well as post-harvest management technology. Detailed proposals are now being formulated by APEDA for seeking French technological consultancy on pre and post-harvest management infrastructure as well as quality assurance programme. As these proposals are still at a preliminary stage, the impact of such a proposed collaboration cannot be assessed at this stage.